

# Vocational Skills and Training to Empower Citizens of India

Ritwika Sahai Bisariya

Lecturer

M.G.C.G. University, Chitrakoot,  
Satna, India

E-ID: ritwika\_100@rediffmail.com

Akhilesh Mishra

Assistant Professor

Vindhya Institute of Management & Science,  
Satna, India

E-ID: akhbhavi17072008@gmail.com

**Abstract—** This paper explores different aspects of technical and vocational education and training as well as skills training in rural areas. Emphasis is put on agriculture and related activities and existing gender differences. It demonstrates that not enough is being done on vocational and skills training in rural areas in particular for women, as shown by statistics on vocational skills and training in general.

Vocational skills development and technical training are central to agricultural and rural employment. They prepare mostly young people for work in the formal and informal sector in rural areas and thus play an important role in poverty reduction. The better the training and the more refined the skills are in terms of human capital, the higher the income and returns and the better the rural livelihoods

**Index Terms—**HRM, HRM Practices, HR Challenges.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Vocational skills development and technical training are central to agricultural and rural employment. They prepare mostly young people for work in the formal and informal sector in rural areas and thus play an important role in poverty reduction. The better the training and the more refined the skills are in terms of human capital, the higher the income and returns and the better the rural livelihoods.

In many projects the targeting of youth is based on the common misconception that boys and girls are a homogeneous group. Too often, the gender neutral use of the word youth implies that programmes do not cater for the different needs of young women and reach mostly young men. Who are more visible in public?

Early marriage and child bearing further limit the possibilities of rural young women who are severely restricted in their mobility and restrained to the domestic sphere in many societies. Public and private providers of education and training poorly serve rural youth especially in when comparing opportunities available to urban youth. The extent

of ‘urban bias’ in the provision of publicly funded education and training services is large in most low income developing countries (Bennell 2007).

The deployment of teachers and other educational staff or trainers to rural areas is difficult in many countries. Several factors contribute to dampen the demand for education among poor parents including the poor quality of teaching, high direct and indirect schooling costs and the paucity of ‘good jobs’.

Education has also a lower level of priority compared to other short term pressing needs such as maximizing household income or providing food security. About 130 million young people in developing countries (15-24 years) are classified as ‘illiterate’ with women representing 59 per cent (UNESCO 2008). The high number of illiterate youth and those with low schooling are mostly living in rural areas and are badly prepared for productive work (Atchoarena & Gasperini 2003.)

## II. VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The Vocational Education Program (VEP) was started in 1976-77 under the programme of Vocationalisation of Higher Secondary Education in general education institutions. The National Working Group on Vocationalisation of Education (Kulandaiswamy Committee, 1985) reviewed the Vocational Education Programme in the country and developed guidelines for the expansion of the programme.

Its recommendations led to the development of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) on Vocationalisation of Secondary Education, which started being implemented from 1988. Its purpose is to “enhance individual employability, reduce the mismatch between demand and supply of skilled manpower and provide an alternative for those pursuing higher education without particular interest or purpose.”

37 Vocational education falls under the purview of the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD). The All-India Council for Vocational Education (AICVE), under

MHRD, is responsible for planning, guiding and coordinating the program at the national level. State Councils for Vocational Education (SCVE) perform similar functions at the state level.

### III. VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Unlike vocational education, vocational training programs in India fall outside the formal schooling cycle vocational training is institution-based with varying entry requirements as well as course durations (based on the course). The proportion of practical to theoretical instruction in vocational training programs is also higher than in vocational education.

#### **Skills development and technical training for agricultural and rural employment**

The focus of UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is on basic and especially primary education (MDG 1).<sup>3</sup> This emphasis on the first cycle of education contributes to the neglect of post-basic education and training including technical and vocational education and training (Fluitman 2005). Bennell (1999) found that vocational education and training (VET) was largely absent in most government and donor poverty reduction strategies in developing countries. This marginalization of VET is due to a lack of donor investment and inaction by many governments. While there is a need to adjust development efforts and build the human assets and capabilities of the poor, vocational education and training has been receiving less and not more attention.

Policies and approaches to technical and vocational education and training (TVET) have undergone major re-adjustment in the 1970s and 1980s (Colclough 1980; Psacharopoulos 1994), including the seminal 1980 World Bank Education Sector Policy Paper (World Bank 1980). As a result, resources were put into primary education and public provision of technical and vocational education and training was reduced.

The seminal article on vocational training written by Foster in 1965 is again receiving attention. He described the "Vocational School Fallacy" in developing countries and stated that it 'it might be more fruitful to encourage small-scale vocational training schemes closely associated with the actual ongoing developments and quite divorced from the formal educational system' (Foster 1965, p. 154). Foster also suggested that 'the burdens of vocational training should be shifted to those groups who are actually demanding skilled labour of various types' (p. 158) thus advocating a people centred and needs driven approach to vocational training.

This seems to concur with the discussion in many donor agencies and academia linking skills development to poverty reduction. The debate whether to vocationalize or not is ongoing (Oketch 2007). The newer term technical and vocational skills development (TVSD) is often used to describe flexible skills, learning to learn, going beyond literacy and numeracy skills and including more than 'life skills' (King&Palmer 2006; McGrath 2005). TVSD comprises three main types of education or training: public school-based

technical education, in the form of junior and senior secondary education but non-tertiary institutions; public vocational training centres and industrial training institutes; and training in the informal sector which often include traditional apprenticeship training or traditional forms of training offered at artisan workshops owned by master craftsmen/women (King 2007).

These forms of training (carpentry, masonry, auto-mechanics welding, tailoring, dressmaking, cosmetics, hairdressing) are often provided on the basis of family ties. Many trainers or operators tend to exhibit creativity but often lack necessary technical knowledge related to their skills and the capital to expand their enterprises (Atchoarena and Delluc 2002; Oketch 2007).

### IV. TRAINING FOR THE INFORMAL SECTOR

**Over 90 percent of employment in India is in the so called 'informal' sector, with employees working in relatively low productivity jobs.** Provision of appropriate skills may thus be an important intervention to increasing the productivity of this workforce. However, both demand side as well as supply-side constraints has inhibited skills development for this sector.

**On the demand-side, few employees in the informal sector see the importance of skills training.** Many identify lack of access to capital, cumbersome bureaucratic bottlenecks, and lack of access to quality equipment as their main challenges. These issues are hardly unique to India – as shown by Johanson and Van Adams (2004) in their study on VET in Africa. In some sense the workers are correct – training in itself is not enough to improve the productivity of the labor force. If this is not accompanied by a package which includes access to credit, markets and technology, it will have little positive impact on productivity. However, skills development is an essential element of that package.

**On the supply side, there are a number of institutions which are trying to provide skills training geared to the needs of the informal sector.** As shown below, these efforts are fairly small, not well coordinated and often do not take into account the wholistic needs for training and other support services of informal sector workers. Given that informal sector workers are such an important segment of the labor market, this chapter focuses on their needs for skills development and access to related services.

#### **I. System Description**

While there are no formal programs of training for the informal sector, a number of institutions are involved in providing training which is geared to the needs of informal sector employees. Some of the key ones are listed below.

##### **(a) Community Polytechnics**

**Community Polytechnics have been established as entities within polytechnics rather than as autonomous institutions.** To that extent Community Polytechnics (CPs) are part of the formal system. However, they provide training *within* communities<sup>29</sup> and their approach should be

considered informal. There are now 675 CPs, training about 450,000 people a year. Courses are of 3 to 9 months duration and there are no entry pre-requisites. The MHRD intends to incorporate CPs into all AICTE-accredited institutions by the end of the 10th Plan. The typical courses and services provided by the CPs are shown in

**CPs deliver the same types of courses – in a community environment – that are delivered through vocational education in schools, but the focus would seem to be on the informal sector of the economy.** The content of CP courses would surely be different to those in schools. Office management and fashion design. Courses with these titles are also offered as two year duration courses under vocational education. Participants in CP courses gain no special qualification and no particular credit toward any further training in ITIs or polytechnics. According to the 10th Plan, the courses and services of CPs should emphasize the transfer of technology to communities, manpower development and rendering of technical and support services.

**(b) Jan Shikshan Sansthan**

**Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) was launched as an adult education program aimed at improving the vocational skills and quality of life of workers and their family members.** JSS (literally, Institute for People's Education) is financed by the Adult Education Directorate within MHRD. The program initially focused on adults and young people living in urban and industrial areas and on people who had migrated from rural areas. The target group has since shifted to newly literate workers and to unskilled and unemployed youth in both rural and urban areas. JSS acts as a district level resource to organize vocational training and skill development programs. At least 25 percent of the program beneficiaries must be neoliterates.

**By the end of the 9th Plan there were 122 JSSs offering 255 types of vocational courses.** Courses ranged from candle and *agarbatti* making, sewing and embroidery to computer courses. In 2001-02, almost 1.5 million people received vocational training or participated in other JSS activities. Just over 60 percent of participants were women. All the JSSs are managed by non-government organisations (NGOs) under Boards of Management that include a GoI representative. They must be registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, incorporating a Memorandum of Association, Rules and Regulations.

**(c) National Institute of Open Schooling**

**The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) provides “opportunities to those who would have otherwise missed out.”** NIOS offers Open Basic Education (OBE) programs designed to bring students to Grade 3, Grade 5 or Grade 8 level. Its mandate especially covers designated groups described as girls and women, working men and women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, the handicapped, other disadvantaged groups and rural youth. By assisting rural youth, NIOS potentially serves the largest group of new

entrants to the labor market, a group most likely to find itself working in the informal labor market.

**NIOS has accredited 731 training providers to deliver a Vocational Education Programs.** These Accredited Vocational Institutes (AVIs) include government financed institutions such as JSS, which provide non-formal vocational courses in urban areas and it is (in Uttar Pradesh but no other States). It also includes non-government providers. Courses may be taken in combination with academic subjects at secondary and senior secondary levels. Of the 85 course offered, only 12 are open to students who have less than Grade 8 completion; 54 courses (almost two out of three) require at least Grade 10 completion.

**(d) Other Training for the Informal Sector**

**A number of agencies provide smaller programs for the informal sector.** These are described in detail in Annex C. Almost all central and state line ministries provide some form of training. They include:

- The Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment administers schemes aimed at creating sustained employment opportunities to secure a certain minimum level of employment and income for the rural poor. They include the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) Employment Assurance Scheme, the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), the Programme for Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), and the Training of Rural Youth for Self-employment (TRYSEM).
- The Department of Women and Child Development runs Support to Training and Employment Programs (STEP), a NORAD-assisted program on employment cum income-generation. The scheme offers condensed courses of education and vocational training program for women.
- The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has 51 training centres, including 12 village industry training centers.
- Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana provides wage employment and self-employment to educated unemployed youths aged between 18 and 35 years.
- The Bharatiya Yuva Shakti Trust (BYST) aims to help unemployed or under-employed youths aged 18-35 years to set up or develop their businesses.
- Entrepreneurship Development Centres/Institutes provide training in different fields based on the resource endowment of the area.
- The National Renewal Fund (NRF) provides assistance to cover the cost of retraining and redeployment of employees arising from modernisation, technology upgradation and industrial restructuring.
- The Ministry of Agriculture's Krishi Vigyan Kendra's (KVK) impart training to farmers, farm women, and rural youth and grass roots level extension workers in broad based agricultural production systems.

## V. EMPLOYMENT SCENARIO IN INDIA

India is a predominantly agricultural country. Wage employment is a small fraction of total employment. As per estimates of the National Sample Survey Organisation, there were about 90 lakhs people totally unemployed in 1999-2000, out of which about 55 lakhs were educated with secondary and higher education levels. Compared to the size of the population, these numbers appear small. What is serious is the large number of employed persons working with low levels of productivity and income. Out of an estimated 397 million employed, about 122 million are poor, i.e. living below the poverty line. The main reasons for such a situation include inadequate growth of the economy, power productivity & labour force being in adequately skilled and growth rate of labour force being higher than the growth rate of employment etc.

### Employment & Unemployment Situation in India

[during Jan-June 2004 (Usual Status basis)].

- Total Labour Force 45.8 Cr.
- Total Employment 44.7 Cr.
- Total Number of open unemployment 1.06 Cr.
- Employment in organized sector 2.64 Cr.
- Employment in Unorganized Sector 42.10 Cr.
- No. of job seekers with Employment Exchanges 4.03 Cr. (as on 31.12.2005)
- 71% of the job seekers registered with the Employment Exchanges are less than 29 years of age during 2003.
- Educated (X Standard and above) job seekers constitute about 75% of the total job seekers registered with the employment exchanges during 2003.
- Most of the job seekers (about 80%) in employment exchange are without any professional skill.

### Tenth Plan Strategy and Emerging Areas for Employment

- 8% growth with business as usual will contribute only 3 cr. employment opportunities.
- Special employment generation programmes will yield 2 cr. employment opportunities.
- Special emphasis on agriculture, irrigation, agro-forestry, small and medium enterprises, information communication technology, tourism and other services.

### Importance of Skill development and Training

Skills and knowledge are the driving forces of economic growth and social development of any country. The economy becomes more productive, innovative and competitive through the existence of more skilled human potential. The level of employment, its composition and the growth in employment opportunities are the critical indicator of the process of development in any economy. Increasing pace of globalization and technological changes provide both challenges and growing opportunities for economic expansion and job creation. In taking advantage of these opportunities as well as in minimizing the social costs and dislocation, which the transition to a more open economy entails, the level and

quality of skills that a nation possess are becoming critical factors. Countries with higher and better levels of skills adjust more effectively to the challenges and opportunities of globalization.

### Rates of return to agricultural skills training

The role of human capital in a country's growth is the subject of prolonged debate, and a number of authors have tried to provide an empirical demonstration of the relation between education and agricultural productivity in developing countries. All studies on Rates of Return to Education (RORE) in the development context follow the footsteps of the World Bank which was most influential in promoting the economics of education and human capital theory, seeing education primarily as an investment and favouring primary education with its particularly high rate of return in relation to its costs (Psacharopoulos 1994; Mundy 2002).

Research by the World Bank staff and others shows the relative efficiency of various types of inputs to educational systems. 4 RORE methodologies shaped the World Bank's educational and vocational training policies, giving highest investment priority to primary education and reducing government subsidization of secondary and tertiary education (Heyneman 2003).

For returns of education on agriculture, the work by Lockheed, Jamison and Lau (1980) is often quoted as a landmark study that shows that farmers' education has a positive impact on their productivity. Agricultural productivity is 7.4 per cent higher on average for a farmer with four years of elementary education. This effect is stronger in an environment undergoing modernization than in a traditional environment.

There is a link between poverty reduction and skills training and increased growth, productivity and innovation, in particular for the informal sector (Fluitman 2002). Skills development improves output, quality, diversity and occupational safety and improves health, thereby increasing incomes and livelihoods of the poor. It also helps to develop social capital and strengthens knowledge about informal sector associations, rural organizations and governance. According to human capital theory, the better educated the agricultural labour, the higher their productivity (Atchoarena et. al. 2003).

For example, individuals make individual choices concerning their education, but this choice has a strong economic impact through the resulting increase in total factor productivity and improved livelihoods. It is now widely asserted, though not so far evident in policy change, that women are not a marginal interest group, but the priority group for human capital development (e.g. World Bank 2000a, b).

This is not based on gender equality arguments, but in terms of pro-poor growth and economic growth in general. Klasen (2002) estimated that if Sub-Saharan Africa had given the same priority to addressing gender inequality in education as was given in East Asia, real per-capita annual growth between 1960 and 1992 would have been between 0.4 per cent and 0.6 per cent faster.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Finally to conclude this paper explores different aspects of technical and vocational education and training as well as skills training in rural areas. Emphasis is put on agriculture and related activities and existing gender differences. It demonstrates that not enough is being done on vocational and skills training in rural areas in particular for women, as shown by statistics on vocational skills and training in general. The non-involvement of women is also a result of their low levels of schooling or persisting illiteracy. Skills development for rural youth and rural poor is not only about agriculture and related skills in rural development, but also a preparation and investment for off-farm working and improving skills for migration. The paper argues that more quality investment is needed in vocational and skills training for rural youth and special attention should be paid to addressing the needs of women. Concerted efforts of donors, Governments and the private sector are needed to achieve better quality in training and fill the gap caused by years of neglect.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Akyeampong, A. (2005), Vocationalisation of Secondary Education in Ghana in Lauglo, J and Maclean, R (eds) Vocationalisation of Secondary Education Revisited, UNEVOC/World Bank : Springer.
- [2] Atchoarena, D. and Delluc, A. (2002), Revisiting Technical and Vocational Education in sub-Saharan Africa: an Update on Trends, Innovations and Challenges, UNESCO, IIEP.
- [3] Atchoarena, D. and Gasperini, L. (2003). Education for rural development: towards new policy responses. FAO, UNESCO.
- [4] Bennell, P. (2007), Promoting Livelihood Opportunities For Rural Youth, Paper presented at Roundtable 3: Generating remunerative livelihood opportunities for rural youth, IFAD Governing Council 2007
- [5] Bennell, P. (1999), Learning to change: Skills development among the economically vulnerable and socially excluded in developing countries. Employment and Training Papers 43. Employment and Training Department, ILO: Geneva.
- [6] Braun, A. R., J. Jiggins, N. Röling, Van den Berg, H. and P. Snijders (2005), A Global Survey and Review of Farmer Field School Experiences. International Livestock Research Institute, Nairobi
- [7] Braun, A. R., and Duveskog, D. (2008), The Farmer Field School Approach – History, Global Assessment and Success Stories, Paper commissioned by IFAD (Draft 2008).
- [8] Camillieri, J. (2007), Le micro entreprise rurale en Afrique: De la survie à la croissance, le cas rwandais.
- [9] L'Harmattan. Colclough, C. (1980), Primary Schooling and Economic Development: A review of the Evidence, World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 399, Washington:
- [10] The World Bank/FAO/WFP (2007), Getting started! Running a junior farmer field and life school. FAO/WFP, Rome, Italy.
- [11] Fluitman, F. (2005), Poverty reduction, decent work, and the skills it takes or: towards correcting a partial view of training needs in African development.
- [12] Fluitman, F. (2002), Unpublished plenary discussion on the draft of the World Bank's Vocational Skills Development in Sub-Saharan Africa: Synthesis of a regional review. Edinburg University, September 2002.
- [13] Freire, P. (2000), Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 30th anniversary edition, Continuum, New York.
- [14] Foster, P. (1965), The Vocational School Fallacy in Development Planning. In: Anderson, A. and Bowman, M. (Eds.) Education and Economic Development. Aldine: Chicago.
- [15] Heyneman, S. P. (2003), The History and Problems in the Making of Education Policy at the World Bank 1960–2000, *International Journal of Educational Development*, 23(3), 315–
- [16] IFAD (2008a), Local Livelihood Programme, Nepal, IFAD Grant 824, Mid Term Review, Final Report. *M. Haril - Draft for discussion* – 21 IFAD (2008 b), Gash Sustainable Livelihoods Regeneration Project- Community Development and Capacity Building Component: Assessment of the Capacity Building Interventions and the Animal Health Agents.
- [17] IFAD (2007 a), Country-specific grant to the International Labour Organization for the Skills Enhancement for Employment Project in Nepal, EB 2007/92/R.40.
- [18] IFAD (2007 b), République du Mali, Évaluation du programme de pays, Rapport No. 1905- ML.
- [19] King, K., McGrath, S. and Rose, P. (2007), Beyond the basics: Educating and training out of poverty, *International Journal of Educational Development* 27, 349–357
- [20] King, K. and Palmer R. (2006), Skills Development and Poverty Reduction: The State of the Art. Centre of African Studies, University of Edinburgh.
- [21] Klasen, S. (2002). Insert of the Holy Grail: How to Achieve Pro-poor Growth? Munich: University of Munich, Department of Economics.
- [22] Lee, K.W. (2006), Effectiveness of government's occupational skills development strategies for small- and medium-scale enterprises: A case study of Korea, *International Journal of Educational Development* 26 (2006) 278–294.
- [23] Lockheed, M.E., Jamison, D.T. and Lau, L.J. (1980), "Farmer education and farm efficiency". In: Economic Development and Cultural Change, 29, 37-76.
- [24] Mayoux, L. (2005), Learning and Decent Work for All: new directions in training and education for pro-poor growth InFocus Programme on Skills, Knowledge and Employability, ILO: Geneva.
- [25] McGrath, S. (2005), The Challenge of Rural Skills Development. Debates in Skills Development, Paper 10, Working Group for International Cooperation in Skills Development. ILO/NORRAG/SDC: Geneva.
- [26] Mundy, K. E. (2002), Retrospect and Prospect: Education in a Reforming World Bank, *International Journal of Educational Development*, 22 (5), pp. 483-508.
- [27] Moser, C. (1989), Gender planning in the third world: Meeting practical and strategic gender needs, *World Development* 17 (11), Pages 1799-1825
- [28] Oketch, M. O. (2007), To vocationalise or not to vocationalise? Perspectives on current trends and issues in technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in Africa, *International Journal of Educational Development* 27 (2007) 220–234
- [29] Palmer, R. (2007) Skills for work?: From skills development to decent livelihoods in Ghana's rural informal economy. *International Journal of Education Development* 27 (2007) 397–420.
- [30] Psacharopoulos, G. (1994), *Returns to Investment in Education: A Global Update*. World Development 22(9): 1325-1343.

- [31] UNESCO (2008), *EFA Global Monitoring Report; Overcoming Inequality; Why Governance matters*. UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2007), *Participation in Formal Technical and Vocational Education and Training Programmes Worldwide - An Initial Statistical Study*. Montreal, Canada.
- [32] World Bank, FAO, IFAD (2008), *Gender in Agriculture Sourcebook*. Washington DC. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
- [33] The World Bank World Bank (2004), *Skills development in Sub-Saharan Africa*. World Bank, Washington DC.
- [34] Report of the Working Group on Skill Development and Training set up for preparation of XI plan
- [35] Kuruba Gangappa TRAINING IN BUSINESS ENTREPRENEURSHIP SKILLS THROUGH DISTANCE LEARNING PAPER SUBMITTED FOR PRESENTATION AT THE SIXTH PAN-COMMONWEALTH FORUM ON OPEN LEARNING
- [36] Hartl Maria Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development for poverty reduction – do rural women benefit?